

Isaac Bowen, Jr., House  
312 Benefit Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-161

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
62-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ISAAC BOWEN, JR., HOUSE

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RI,  
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62-

Address: 312 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

Plat 12, lot 423.

Present Owner George E. Wilson and wife Margaret  
and Occupant:

Present Use: Dwelling

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Original and Subsequent Owners:

- 1768 Joseph Whipple, yeoman, sells for 30£ lawful money to Isaac Bowen, housewright, a certain lot of land bounded: S/ly on a cross street (now Planet Street) or land running from Main Street to Back Street on which it measures 50'; E by Back Street 100'; N by Dr. Robert Gibbs 50'; W by Joseph Whipple 100'. - Deed Book 18, page 300 in Providence City Hall.
- 1804 Isaac Bowen sells for \$600 to Isaac Bowen Jr a certain lot of land bounded: S by Isaac Bowen 48'; E by Benefit Street 41' 4"; N by Stephen Harris 58' 8"; W by Zebediah Farnum. Deed Book 29, page 244 in Providence City Hall.
- 1808 Isaac Bowen sells for \$80 to Isaac Bowen Jr., Mariner, a certain lot of land bounded: S by Isaac Bowen 49'; E by Benefit Street 8'; N by Isaac Bowen Jr 50'; W by Zeb. Farnum. Deed Book 32, page 157 in Providence City Hall.
- 1815 Isaac Bowen sells to Isaac Bowen Jr a certain lot of land bounded: S by Isaac Bowen 48'; E by Benefit Street 10'; N by Isaac Bowen Jr. 50'; W by Zebediah Farnum 10'. - Deed Book 38, Page 159 in Providence City Hall. Isaac Bowen Jr's land now measures 59' on Benefit Street.
- 1815 Isaac Bowen Jr., merchant, sells for \$3600 to Edward Carrington "a certain lot of land with DWELLING HOUSE, two stories high with barn and outbuildings bounded: S by Isaac Bowen 48'; E by Benefit Street 59' 4"; N by Stephen Harris 50'; W by Zebediah Farnum 76' 8"...and comprises the lots I bought of said Isaac Bowen by deed in 1804, by deed 1808, and by deed in 1815."- Deed Book 38, page 195 in Providence City Hall.

- 1822 Edward Carrington, merchant, sells for \$3500 the above property to Nathaniel Bishop, merchant..."and is the same I bought of Isaac Bowen Jr in 1815."- Deed Book 46, page 211 in Providence City Hall.
- 1858 Nathaniel Bishop's will probated...leaving all of his property to his wife, Fannie Bishop. - Wills Book 19, page 93 in Providence City Hall.
- 1865 Fannie Bishop's will leaves all her estate to grandchildren, Fannie W Bishop and Ellen Burnside Cameron. - Wills Book 29, page 226 in Providence City Hall.
- 1893 Ellen B Cameron sells to Gardner C Luther a certain lot of land with dwelling house bounded: S by Nancy K Bishop 48'; E by Benefit Street 53.52; N by heirs of Ezra Howard 52'; N by Estate of Ambrose Burnside 70', and is the estate conveyed to the grantor by will of her grandmother, Fannie Bishop subject to lease from E B Cameron to Dr C M Godding which expires in 1895. - Deed Book 384, page 348 in Providence City Hall.

This property was taxed to the following persons in the years designated:

1894 Gardner C Luther	1923 Hattie H Chappell
1985 Frederick E Perkins	1924 Israel Chernick
1920 Frederick E Perkins Estate	1944 Tille Chernick
1922 Chas H Jr and Willard C Perkins and Ada L Kirby	1944 Israel Chernick
1922 Flora W Hunt	1947 Charles W Thompson & wife Almeda J
	1948 George E Wilson & wife Margaret

Taken from Mss. tax descriptions in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, for the 1814 Providence direct tax to the federal government:

Isaac Bowen jr

1 Dwelling House on W side of Benefit Street 37'x31'..2 stories high...brick ends...4 chimneys...2 outside doors, chaise house and necessary adjoining of wood 14'x15'. Lot on which it stands 40' x 50'.

(Also...lot on Planet Street 30'x130'..Dwelling house occ by William Green 30' square...2 stories high...1 chimney.. wood. and barn occupied by self..25'x30'..2 stories high... wood)

B. Date of Erection: Before 1814, probably c. 1805.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
August 1961

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural interest and merit: This is a medium-sized frame house, characteristic of the early 19th century
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: Rectangular main block, 34' (five-bay east front) x 30', two stories; wing to south side, 12' x 15'. Addition to the rear 5' x 15'.
2. Foundations: Ashlar on the front, brick on the sides and rear
3. Wall construction: Timber frame, clapboards on front and rear walls, brick end walls on the north and south sides.
4. Porches: Small entrance porch, gabled roof with pedimented end, molded cornices with fret bed mold, later Greek Revival Ionic columns.
5. Chimneys: Five brick chimneys: two in north end wall of main block, one in south end wall of main block, one within the main block toward the rear, one at south end of south wing.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doors and doorways: Later four-panel door with upper panels with semicircular heads. Leaded fanlight over door set in arch with key block.
  - b. Windows: Double-hung windows, six-light sash. Lower windows on east front have applied, splayed lintels. Upper windows on front and rear of main block have molded heads continuous with bed mold of roof cornice. Other windows in frame walls have mitered, molded frames. Window openings in brick end walls have flat brick arches.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with ridge parallel to the front, asphalt shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Boxed molded cornice.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central hall, five-room plan, plus one room in south wing and one room in rear addition; double parlors on the north side of main block, another parlor at southeast corner of main block, dining room in center of rear of main block. Similar plan on second floor.
2. Stairways: Main stairway in central hall, long straight run with landing and short turn at the top, open well, open string, three slender rectangular balusters per step, round newels, straight handrail breaks at the newels, shadow rail at the wall, delicate sawn scroll ornaments on step ends.
3. Flooring: Wide board floors
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, papered
5. Doors and doorways: Six-panel doors, molded mitered architraves on doorways, light scale moldings.
6. Trim: Reeded cornice in central hall, molded cornices elsewhere. Molded chair rail and baseboards. Smooth wood dado in dining room and central hall made of two horizontal boards. Trim in double parlors added about mid-19th century.
7. Hardware: Butt hinges. Some silver plated door knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric
9. Heating: Central steam heat. Four fireplaces on first floor and two on second floor have simple, mid-19th century marble mantels with semicircular headed openings and incised decoration. Two original one-story wood mantels on second floor. Large cooking fireplace with oven at the side in basement.

D. Site

1. Orientation: House faces east, very narrow lot, house set at the sidewalk line, terrace and garden in the rear.
2. Walks: Brick sidewalk at the front in herringbone pattern, with flagstone section from entrance to street. Brick walks in the garden. Cobblestone and flagstone terrace.

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